United Nations A/53/PV.42

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 22 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/357)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/53/357.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 27

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/434)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.11)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.11.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of October, I have the honour to submit, on behalf of the Arab delegations of Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine, the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.11, under agenda item 27, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

The League of Arab States is considered to be the oldest regional organization in the world, because it was established in March 1945 — seven months before the founding of the United Nations itself. The League is proud to be very closely linked with the United Nations. Such a link is considered to be a real, tangible expression of the cooperation and coordination that are required

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under the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter between the United Nations and regional arrangements. I would note here that such links have been strengthened since the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session adopted by consensus a resolution on cooperation between both organizations.

There is no doubt that at present we see that the relationship between the two organizations is becoming more diversified as far as joint cooperation is concerned. Foremost among the issues of concern to the two organizations are matters related to international peace and security. In this respect, we believe that there is an urgent need to intensify cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in order to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that will guarantee to the Palestinian people all their legitimate national rights, foremost among which is its inalienable right to establish its independent state. It will also guarantee the rights of Syria and Lebanon to regain their occupied territories.

From another perspective, the Arab States note with satisfaction the reference in document A/53/434 to cooperation between the League and the various organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the economic, social, developmental and technical fields, thereby benefiting all the member States of the League. We also note that there are other areas and greater opportunities for cooperation and coordination that should be pursued further, especially at the technical level, in order to achieve the common objectives of the two organizations.

In the preamble to the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly, certain paragraphs stress the aspiration of both organizations to consolidate the ties existing between them in various fields and their desire to continue cooperation in order to contribute to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, the General Assembly expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action taken by him to implement the proposals adopted at the coordination meetings between the two organizations over the last year. We also request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination between the two organizations and the agencies related to both of them.

Operative paragraph 10 welcomes the results of the sectoral meeting on trade and development held in Cairo in June 1998. Paragraph 12 reaffirms the importance of holding the next meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the two secretariats during 1999, and a sectoral meeting on one of the areas of priority during the year 2000.

Finally, on behalf of the Arab Group, I should like to invite the General Assembly, which represents the international community, to support cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States through the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution before us.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950, I now call on the observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Hassouna (League of Arab States) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. Your election to this lofty post bears witness to the trust we place in you and the appreciation of the international community for your country, Uruguay.

The League of Arab States came into being in March 1945 as the first regional organization within the framework of the new international order that was established following the Second World War. Cooperation between the League and the United Nations has developed gradually and continuously, and as a result we have accumulated considerable experience and achieved major objectives over the years. All of our experiences and achievements confirm the necessity and the importance of intensification of our cooperation to ensure international peace and security and to serve the common interests of both organizations, not only at the political level, but also at the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian levels.

In this context, allow me to reaffirm the keenness of the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies to continue and strengthen cooperation with the United Nations in all fields. This was referred to in the report submitted by the United Nations Secretary-General to the Assembly today in document A/53/434. That report contains the most important aspects of cooperation, coordination, consultation and exchange of information between the League of Arab States and the United Nations at all levels over the period covered.

The report of the Secretary-General that we have before us states that consultations were pursued between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States both during the last session of the General Assembly and during the United Nations Secretary-General's visit to the Middle East in March 1998. At those meetings, the two Secretaries-General discussed Arab issues of regional and international importance, such as the questions of Iraq, Libya, Somalia and the Comoros, in addition to the Palestinian question and the peace process in the Middle East. Although they discussed those issues, in our view progress in efforts to contain or settle many of these crises depend to a great extent on constructive cooperation and fruitful consultations between these two Secretaries-General, in fulfilment of the common objectives and interests of both the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

At its last session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution to hold a sectoral meeting on the question of trade and development — a priority area for the attainment of progress in economic and social development in the Arab region — at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in 1998. That meeting was quite successful, as it stressed the importance of giving impetus to international and regional cooperation in the area of trade and development. In this respect, account was taken of the efforts to set up an Arab free-trade zone, to develop inter-Arab trade relations and to deal with the social and economic consequences resulting from world economic trends, while strengthening Arab economic potential with respect to competitiveness in the world markets. This was done in full awareness of the fact that the development ambitions of the Arab States cannot be fully achieved except in an environment of stability, security and just and comprehensive peace in the Arab region.

From this rostrum, at the last session of the General Assembly, the League of Arab States expressed its appreciation and support for the Secretary-General's report on reform which, *inter alia*, affirmed the Organization's determination to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations so that these organizations may increasingly become partners with the United Nations in all areas relating to international peace and security and the prevention of conflicts. The League of Arab States participated in the third joint meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, held at Headquarters on 28 and 29 July 1998, on the question of cooperation to prevent conflicts. At that meeting, the League of Arab States expressed its concept of how to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in this sphere. In this regard, it stressed preventive measures, including early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, preventive redeployment, preventive disarmament and peace-building on the basis of evolving economic and social capacities. We look forward to the meeting on follow-up, to be held by the representatives of concerned organizations on 10 and 11 December of this year, hoping that it might be possible through that meeting to set up new, practical mechanisms for strengthening cooperation in conflict prevention measures. This would accomplish complementarity of undertakings by the various organizations in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Despite the increasing role and importance of the League of Arab States in endeavours relating to international peace and security, as has been reflected in Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the League does not yet have recognition by the host country of United Nations Headquarters; nor has it been granted the same full diplomatic status as other regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. That recognition of diplomatic status for the League of Arab States and other, similar regional organizations, such as the Organization of African States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, would bolster the capacities of the Missions of those organizations, facilitating their tasks, and removing some common obstacles to the fulfilment of their responsibilities in the host country. In this respect, we should bear in mind that the League of Arab States, as well as other regional organizations accredited to the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, are accorded full diplomatic status there. We are convinced that the Government of the United States will pay due attention to this question in light of the comprehensive support for this just request by members of the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue and to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories occupied since 1967 is first among the priorities of the League of Arab States. We hope that present efforts to give new impetus to this peace process will lead to positive results which would contribute to the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement to the Middle East problem.

At its last meeting the Council of the League of Arab States, at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held in September 1998, highlighted the importance of

supporting the peace process on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the land-for-peace principle and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. Moreover, the League's Council stressed the need to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Lebanese territory. The League also called on Israel to resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point where they were stopped, more than two years ago. The Council of the League of Arab States has also called for the implementation of Security Council resolution 465 (1980), which declares the settlements established on occupied Arab land illegal and calls for the dismantling of these settlements. The Council of the League has also stressed that all measures adopted by Israel to change the geographic and demographic status of Jerusalem are null and void, in accordance with Security Council resolutions adopted in this regard. If the United Nations is truly keen on respecting the bases of international legitimacy, the rule of law and the commitment by all States, without exception, to the observance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the decisions of the Organization, the League of Arab States feels that it is high time Israel respected United Nations resolutions, particularly those of the Security Council. These are resolutions which must be complied with by all States, without exception. Otherwise, the United Nations would allow itself to practise double standards and thereby lose its credibility and efficiency.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm that our support for the United Nations stems from the profound conviction of the member States of the League of Arab States that there is a need to apply the principles, ideals and lofty goals of the United Nations Charter. If is also based upon the League's keen desire, as a regional organization, to have constructive cooperation with the United Nations in all fields in order to promote common interests in the areas of peace and development. These issues are highlighted in the draft resolution before the Assembly today, and I hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.11.

At the last session of the General Assembly the draft resolution on this item was adopted without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.11?

Draft resolution A/53/L.11 was adopted (resolution 53/8).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to explain a position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Gilon (Israel): The delegation of Israel has joined the consensus on the resolution on this item for the fifth time in a row. In so doing, we are guided by the desire to make peace with our neighbours, all of which are members of the League of Arab States.

Today there is new hope for progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track, and we continue to strive for progress on the other tracks as well. The peace process, which began in Madrid in 1991, was, after all, based both on the bilateral tracks between Israel and its neighbours and on the multilateral track.

We take this opportunity to call upon the Arab States to resume participation on the multilateral track so that progress can be made in the crucial areas covered by this channel.

Peace and economy go hand in hand. One follows on the heels of the other. That is why Israel has continued to actively support the economy of the Palestinians in the territories through a variety of policies, packages and programmes. For example, through courses provided by the Centre for International Cooperation in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Israel trained some 700 Palestinians in 1997 alone in the fields of management, public health and agriculture.

Israel reiterates its support for increased efforts by Arab States towards similarly supporting the Palestinian economy, such as those undertaken by the European Union, Norway, Japan and the United States. In this context, Israel supports cooperation between the United Nations and various regional organizations, including the League of Arab States. Indeed, such cooperation is based on provisions of the United Nations Charter.

It is therefore regrettable that Israel alone remains excluded from the regional group fitting its geographic location, owing to the political objections of some Member States. Israel calls upon the members of the League of Arab States to honour Israel's equal right to

participate in the Group of Asian States. The fact that Israel alone is still denied membership in any regional group directly contradicts the declared commitment of the United Nations to sovereign equality of all its Members, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

This is the first resolution on an issue relating to the Middle East to be adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. We are pleased that the resolution was adopted by consensus. We therefore take this opportunity to recommend that all parties to the peace process exercise restraint in both the language of resolutions to be submitted and all related statements. We cannot build confidence in the Middle East by engaging in polemical debates in New York. The peace process is, by its nature, bilateral between the parties; inflammatory rhetoric offered in international forums surely belongs to another era.

By resolving today to promote in word and in deed an atmosphere of cooperation and growth in the region, the nations involved in the peace process can transform today's hope into tomorrow's reality. Let us hope that they do not miss this historic opportunity.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/272 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.10/Rev.1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Honduras to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.l.

Mr. Noé-Pino (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for submitting his report dated 17 October 1998 on item 21 of the agenda of the General Assembly, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States", in compliance with resolution 51/4 of 24 October 1996.

The Republic of Honduras is deeply honoured to introduce to the Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.10/Rev.1, sponsored by the countries listed therein and by those that joined later: the Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Uruguay.

Without any doubt, the new order of the international community requires ever closer cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations. In this respect, we recall resolution 47/11 of 29 October 1992 relating to the promotion of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). That resolution served as a basis for establishing, in the following years, such important international programmes as the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development and others of equal importance. All of these fall within the purposes espoused by the United Nations and the OAS, whose goals are to ensure international cooperation in seeking solutions to international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and in the development of and fostering of respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Recent efforts by these international organizations have been very satisfactory in joint operations, such as in the case of the Mission in Haiti and the support for Haiti's legislative, municipal and presidential elections in 1995, as well as in their participation in missions as electoral observers — for example, on 20 October 1996 in Nicaragua, where the United Nations system provided technical cooperation. Similarly, there have been joint efforts in the demining efforts in Central America and in the initiatives to turn the western hemisphere into a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS in their efforts to combat drug-trafficking marks a significant international development.

It is quite right to acknowledge the efforts carried out by the two Secretaries-General and the frequent meetings of the representatives of the two organizations, which, happily, on 17 April 1995 signed an agreement for cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS.

This year, in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the OAS Charter in Bogotá on 30 April 1948, my delegation and other delegations representing peoples that cherish international peace and security within a framework of peaceful and harmonious

coexistence have expressed their best wishes for the well-being of that organization.

The conclusions of the eighth Ibero-American Summit, held this month in the Portuguese city of Oporto, noted that new pragmatic criteria are needed in order to find concrete solutions. The dignitaries attending the Summit pointed out that thinking based on merely rhetorical concepts is obsolete and that what is needed in the context of the current economic crisis is for the international financial institutions to provide the necessary resources.

The sponsors of this draft resolution understand that, on the threshold of the next millennium, cooperation with the United Nations is essential if we hope to attain higher levels of development. We should promote the launching of new programmes and the exchange of information, especially between the United Nations economic and social agencies and the Organization of American States, in the context of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development. We must also continue to support the work undertaken by the Organization of American States in the field of regional cooperation.

The particular political circumstances of the Latin American and Caribbean region, the consolidation of its democracies, progress in its relations with the United Nations, and mutual respect for the good-faith fulfilment of commitments undertaken by both organizations in the formal international legal framework have led us, a group of friendly and fraternal countries, to submit this draft resolution to the General Assembly today. We hope that it will be adopted.

Mrs. Alvarez (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Dominican Republic endorses the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States", contained in document A/53/L.10/Rev.1.

Now that the cold war is over, the United Nations must give priority to the eradication of poverty sustainable human development and equal rights for men and women in order to bring human rights fully into force. Similarly, the United Nations, which is characterized by pluralism and democracy, is a perfect tool for promoting a new world order in which the rights to development and peace can be realized. Everything points to the fact that, in the coming century, the international system will be marked by increased globalization and that such problems as unemployment, corruption and the lack of education will, by their very nature, be solvable only at the world level.

In this context, it is essential to strengthen relations between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the Organization of American States (OAS), and regional and subregional economic integration instruments, to which the Latin American and Caribbean countries attach great importance.

In his report, contained in document A/53/272 and addendum 1, the Secretary-General stresses that the need for increased cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has never been greater, while recognizing that no single model of cooperation will cover all eventualities. Nevertheless, it is encouraging for our countries to note that various avenues of cooperation have been considered, reflecting the particular fields and capacities of various organizations.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/4, among the joint activities of the United Nations and the OAS, the International Civilian Mission to Haiti continues to be the principal expression of close cooperation between the two organizations. More specifically, in the past two years, the United Nations has participated actively in our region, coordinating with the OAS various assistance programmes, such as the conference on "Governance, Democracy and Civil Society in the Caribbean Community"; the Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Panama and Mexico, at which the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees was adopted; the International Conference on Central American Refugees; and the San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons.

Moreover, OAS civil servants are taking increasing part in forums organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and vice versa, as well as in an exchange of information, in particular in the area of social policy, statistics and regional integration.

Particular mention should be made of the research programmes undertaken in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay for the joint programme on social policies for Latin America to identify, systematize and propose strategies and policy tools for increasing the efficiency and impact of social programmes.

The strengthening of contacts and regional cooperative relations between the United Nations and the OAS, in the context of the work of the United Nations

International Drug Control Programme and the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse, has been undertaken within a policy of mutual support and exchange of information and technical assistance. The United Nations and the OAS have also cooperated within the framework of the technical cooperation programme undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I should also mention the informal contacts between the World Food Programme, the OAS and the Caribbean Community.

The countries members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States understand that, on the basis of regional cooperation, the United Nations can respond effectively to the complex mandate of these new times.

It is therefore essential for Member States to renew our political commitment to the Organization's future. The Latin American and Caribbean region hopes that the mechanisms for cooperation between the United Nations and our regional body will continue to be strengthened, in ongoing respect for the mandate, functions and legal framework of the Organization of American States enshrined in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. In this way, we will be displaying a pluralist and open spirit, expressed in collective regional cooperation, as manifested in the draft resolution we have submitted to the Assembly. We hope it can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): The 14 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Members of the United Nations fully support draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1, which has just been presented by the Ambassador of Honduras to the General Assembly for adoption. We hope that, with its passage, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) will be further enhanced.

CARICOM recalls with satisfaction that the first joint mission between the United Nations and a regional organization, the OAS, was a successful experiment. It demonstrated that the world Organization and regional arrangements could come together as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter to promote peace and security in areas of potential conflict. The joint United Nations-OAS International Civilian Mission in Haiti has gone further to advance democracy, human rights and economic and social reconstruction for that country's people. CARICOM is proud of its own contribution to this collaborative effort and remains committed to Haiti's development within our family of nations.

We were equally pleased to support resolution 51/4, which amplifies the areas of cooperation between the two institutions concerned. We know that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OAS meet from time to time to discuss their mutual interest in, *inter alia*, conflict prevention, good governance, democracy, human rights and the strengthening of civil society in our region. Such meetings, we believe, can serve to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the two organizations in advancing peace and development throughout the hemisphere.

Although the Caribbean region has fortunately not suffered from the same devastating effects of conflicts that other regions have experienced, we are certainly not so complacent as to believe that we are immune from threats to our welfare. Accordingly, we fully support the use of such instruments as preventive diplomacy, peace-building measures and the rule of law to guarantee our progress. Also, since the roots of conflict lie mainly in poor economic and social conditions, we are concerned to see greater international and institutional cooperation to remove these impediments from our societies.

At a conference on governance, democracy and civil society in the Caribbean, jointly sponsored by the OAS, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), CARICOM and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and held last year in Barbados, the United Nations was brought into closer recognition of the particular conditions and needs of our subregion. We would like to think that that encounter provided a new impetus to our collective efforts to position our small nations to better face the challenges which a new era in international relations has brought.

In this context, we welcome increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS to involve such relevant institutions as the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to name a few.

Two priority areas in functional cooperation for the Caribbean are drug control and sustainable development. We therefore hope that the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) will

continue to consult and coordinate their activities to reduce the deleterious impact of drug abuse and drug trafficking on our small and vulnerable societies. In the second area, sustainable development, we encourage fully a closer and cooperative relationship between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the OAS to fully implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The success of the Barbados Programme of Action is critical to reaching the developmental goals of the Caribbean.

It has been said, and rightly so, that often the most valuable asset for small developing States such as our own is our human resources. Not surprisingly, at the second Summit of the Americas, held in April this year, heads of State or Government decided to give priority to education. We in the Caribbean are fully persuaded of the need to train our young people to become productive citizens not only of our own countries but of the world. We would therefore like to see in the continuing programme of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS more emphasis placed on the major area of human resource development.

With these remarks I wish, on behalf of the CARICOM group of States, to commend resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1 for unanimous adoption by this Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with resolution 253 (III) of 16 October 1948, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of American States.

Mr. Kaufman (Organization of American States) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, Mr. César Gaviria, and of the OAS Assistant Secretary-General, Ambassador Christopher R. Thomas, who is present and sends a special greeting to you, Sir, I should like to extend to members of the Assembly my warm greetings and gratitude for the appropriate and efficient way in which the coordination activities between the two organizations were carried out in the previous biennium.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) has been taking place through many years of sustained interaction in various spheres of regional cooperation.

In the General Assemblies of both organizations, resolutions have been adopted in which it has been agreed that cooperation activities have been and are of great importance, always emphasizing the need to reaffirm existing commitments between both institutions. Cooperation between the two organizations was defined in the Collaboration Agreement signed by the Secretaries-General in April 1995, which formalized a fruitful relationship, confirming once again that the complementarity between the international organizations is not only possible but productive and therefore necessary.

The General Assembly of the OAS held recently in Caracas adopted a resolution on the question of cooperation between the OAS and the United Nations which once again recommended the continuation and strengthening of cooperation activities as well as increased inter-sectoral contacts among those responsible for technical areas in the United Nations and the OAS, in accordance with the terms of the Collaboration Agreement signed by both organizations.

Joint activities carried out in the past two years reflect the diversity of issues in which the OAS and the United Nations have been involved. The International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), which was jointly sponsored by the two organizations, has worked intensively to create appropriate conditions for the restoration of peace and democracy in that nation. The configuration of a mutual consultation system between the OAS and the United Nations on this problem has been improved and has borne fruit, which both organizations believe lays the foundations for future activity in the region.

With regard to conservation of the environment and sustainable development, the United Nations and OAS together made significant contributions during the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development held recently in Bolivia. At that Summit they decided on the challenges of development in Latin America in the coming years and identified the main urban problems that will be the subject of future joint activity. They also adopted mandates for the OAS and various United Nations bodies to implement measures to improve standards of living and environmental conditions throughout the region.

With regard to natural disasters, the OAS has worked with the United Nations to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and in this case we have also had the support and cooperation of multilateral bodies such as the World Bank and the World Health Organization. The OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is

cooperating on an ongoing basis with the United Nations. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Subcommission on the rights of minorities have been of particular interest to both institutions. The OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) was invited to come to the United Nations to participate in an inter-American consultation group on the participation of women in the decision-making process, a meeting that took place at the beginning of the year.

Many other activities have been the subject of joint work between the OAS and the United Nations, such as electoral monitoring and strengthening democratic institutions. In the area of education, science and culture, both organizations are cooperating in creating an international network of institutions to train specialized teachers.

Also of interest to both organizations are other activities such as those carried out by the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse and by the Inter-American Children's Institute, programmes on labour and employment, and cultural issues.

The Organization of American States is pleased with the results of many years of multilateral and regional cooperation — especially this year, when the OAS is to mark its fiftieth anniversary. On the eve of the new millennium, the OAS looks forward to that anniversary with the hope and expectation that we will be able to provide all the citizens of the hemisphere with continued fruitful activity in areas that are of high priority for our member countries. The agenda of the OAS for the coming years, always in coordination with the United Nations and other regional and international organizations, is founded on mandates reflecting the will of member countries and is focused on increasing unified action on the continent.

Through restructuring and administrative modernization, the Organization of American States is ready to engage in more meaningful and direct activities in the region — again, with the support of organizations such as the United Nations. Our association with that Organization over the years has proven to be of importance.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1. In that connection, I wish to announce that Canada and Peru have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongian: Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1, there will be no programme budget implications.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/53/L.10/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 53/9).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 25

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/420)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In connection with this item, I wish to inform members that I have received a letter dated 19 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Peru, in which he indicates that the States members of the Latin American Economic System do not intend to submit a draft resolution under agenda item 25 during the fifty-third session. They request that the item be considered at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, and it is their intention to submit at that session a draft resolution under that item.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of agenda item 25, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", to the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly and to include it in the provisional agenda of that session?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): This concludes our consideration of agenda item 25.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/53/2)

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): As Kenya approaches the end of its two-year tenure in the Security Council, which will conclude in December, my delegation welcomes the report of the Security Council (A/53/2) for the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998. I would also like to thank the current President of the Security Council, my colleague Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom, for introducing the report and for addressing some issues which continue to require the Council's close attention.

The annual submission of the Security Council report, and discussion of it by all the Members of the United Nations, provide a useful opportunity for all nations not only to address the substantive issues which continue to be the focus of the Security Council's work, but also to critically analyse the Council's methods of work. That assessment enables the Council to examine itself and, heeding the advice of Member States, to make appropriate adjustments to its work methods and to the way in which it addresses security issues confronting it. In our two-year tenure, we have seen the concrete implementation of ideas and suggestions advanced in this annual analysis by Member States. However, more work needs to be done, and we are encouraged that Member States continue to air their opinions on the work of the Security Council, because the Council, as a dynamic institution, can only benefit when it is exposed to the oxygen of ideas.

My delegation finds that this year's report is well structured and that it incorporates additional improvements which make it easier to digest. The monthly assessments by successive presidencies of the Council during the reporting period add an insider's flavour and incorporate a dimension of transparency consistent with the Council's stated objectives. Although this innovation is an improvement, the airing and exposure of issues to the general membership continues to be constrained by the tradition of over-confidentiality that sometimes shrouds the informal consultations. Indeed, issues of immense importance are raised, addressed and disposed of in these "informal" settings, allowing only a final, ready-cooked product to be shown to the general membership. While there are occasions when such an approach is appropriate, allowing more meetings, including briefing meetings, to be open to all Members would on balance be a definite plus. Sadly, when meetings are open, they are sometimes not well attended, and participation is limited. However, we believe that discussion of how to strike a happy balance between those opposing tendencies can define an acceptable way forward.

Other innovations which have evolved in the methods of work of the Security Council are the official distribution of the Council's work programme for the month and the circulation by the presidency of a tentative provisional monthly work schedule. The former is now in place and needs no further discussion. The latter, however, merits some comment. The informal working group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions agreed that a provisional monthly work schedule would be circulated by each presidency. Although this has been faithfully carried out by some, it may be proving to be slightly more difficult to institutionalize this practice. In order to firmly root this practice, the tentative provisional schedule as well should be circulated as an official document after it has been approved by the Council, even though it is recognized that it is still tentative and subject to change. In addition, after each presidency the final work schedule that the Council has waded through for that month could be incorporated as part of the documentation that will appear in the annual report, together with the monthly assessment. This proposal can be taken up by the working group.

The ability of the Council to pronounce itself immediately on burning issues of the day directly related to its mandate is a feature that continues to be relevant and has to be nourished. Although the formal instruments available to the Council are well known, and some are even enshrined in the Charter, their immediate use when crises erupt is often constrained by lengthy negotiations. Statements to the press by the President have therefore proved to be effective tools available to the Council to immediately share its perspective on an issue with the general membership, but especially with the public at large. This enables the public to know that the Council is seized of a matter, thereby signalling the trend of possible future action. Naturally, because of their utility and speed, statements to the press can, in the proper hands, be very effective instruments of the Security Council and can therefore be the object of intense and sometimes protracted negotiations in the Council. Moreover, with the media tending to give more coverage to the national security concerns that are of importance to more powerful States, statements to the press by the presidencies of these nations are exposed to more coverage. This is not completely the fault of the media, but the result is that security issues of great concern to some of these nations invariably get aired more frequently than others. A new

relationship between the media and the rotatingpresidencies of the Council therefore needs to be structured to alter this somewhat unfortunate reality.

I would like to say a word about troop-contributing country meetings. These are organized in conjunction with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to exchange information with troop-contributing countries on operations in which their troops are on mission. Although individual national problems are resolved at the Secretariat level and the meetings tend to be formal, we have found such meetings quite useful and relevant, and we encourage their continuation. As much as possible, we urge that the meetings be held prior to the Security Council consultations regarding the conflict area for which the respective peacekeeping operations have been established.

Nearly 22 months have gone by since Kenya was elected to the Security Council. We had hoped that by the time we left the Council the number of agenda items on Africa would have been reduced, thus signalling the beginning of a genuine African renaissance. Unfortunately, the conflicts in Africa have not only increased, but have also mutated into even more complex crises. In our view, there are four categories of African conflict situations before the Council: first, crises that have been resolved, so that post-conflict, peace-building issues prevail; secondly, crises that are hopefully close to being resolved; thirdly, crises that refuse to go away; and fourthly, new and mutated peace and security problems.

In the first category, Liberia's crisis has been resolved, and post-conflict, peace-building issues dominate. We encourage the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to continue their efforts there under the aegis of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia.

In the second category, we had hoped that Sierra Leone would soon join the first category of nations. Unfortunately, the rebels have increased their onslaught and atrocities against the people of Sierra Leone. We encourage the international community to make available even more logistical support to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group to enable it to finish up the job. However, in this second category, thankfully, the situation in the Central African Republic is stabilizing with the help of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic; and with elections imminent and national reconciliation on track, there is some hope.

In the third category — crises that refuse to go away — there is Angola, among other countries. UNITA's assault on the Lusaka Protocol and its refusal to extend State administration has brought the peace process to its knees.

The fourth and last category — the new and mutated conflicts — is unfortunately growing in size. This category includes the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute and Guinea-Bissau.

Regional efforts aimed at resolving these conflicts are active and serious and need to be given maximum support by the Security Council and the international community. In this regard, I would like to inform the Assembly that on Sunday, 18 October 1998, an East African Cooperation Consultative Summit took place on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in my capital city of Nairobi and was chaired by President Daniel arap Moi. The Summit, whose communiqué has been circulated as an official document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1998/970 of 19 October 1998, makes the following proposals. First, it calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Secondly, it calls for negotiations for a ceasefire agreement and a troop standstill. Thirdly, it urges that adequate measures be taken to address the security concerns of neighbouring countries. Fourthly, it urges that the security of marginalized groups be addressed. Fifthly, it calls for an orderly withdrawal of foreign troops. Sixthly, it calls for the initiation of an all-inclusive political dialogue. Finally, it calls for the emplacement of a neutral, international peacekeeping force under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations.

The Summit also supported ongoing regional mediation efforts being carried out by the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in consultation with the OAU and the United Nations. In this regard, we are encouraged to learn that another mediation conference under the aegis of SADC will take place in Lusaka, Zambia, on 26 October 1998. It is only through the vibrant coordination of efforts between the region and the United Nations that a just and lasting peace can be achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although most of the agenda items that the Security Council has on its plate are African, the focus and the allocation of resources to cope with these crises continues to be non-African. Even if there may be a tidy justification for this, my delegation would like to see the striking of a balance that allows for a realistic reallocation of focus and resource distribution that conforms to the

Security Council's Charter-based primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As Kenya prepares to leave the Security Council at the end of this year, the weight of these imbalances continues to press on our collective conscience. Naturally, we hope that they will be noticed, addressed and, indeed, resolved. May I, in this context, take this opportunity to again congratulate the brotherly country of Namibia and the other four newly elected members of the Council — Argentina, Canada, Malaysia and the Netherlands. I wish them success and extend Kenya's complete support and cooperation as they work to make the Council more effective and, indeed, democratic.

I must also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his hard-working staff for continuing to be at the forefront of all peace and security issues. I also wish to thank him for his support on African issues and to encourage him to continue doing his excellent work, in the hope that the attention he gives to these problems will bring forth a rich harvest of peace, security and prosperity.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I wish to thank the President of the Security Council for his clear and concise introduction of the Council's report (A/53/2) covering the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998.

My delegation welcomes the consideration of the Council's report, as this constitutes an exceptional occasion for necessary dialogue and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as both organs of the United Nations seek solutions to the problems facing the international community.

My delegation has carefully examined the contents of this year's report and is pleased to note that there are several improvements over last year's. The improvements introduced can be acknowledged as a positive development from the point of view of the enhancement of transparency and accountability of the Council's work.

We welcome the incorporation in the report of the monthly assessments as an important step in the direction of a more analytical report. The combination of views of the various Presidents during the period has certainly assisted in broadening the perspective on the work of the Council. We also note that briefings continue to be provided to non-members of the Council, following informal meetings, and we would urge that these briefings be institutionalized and expanded to serve as a greater source of information on the activities of the Security Council.

My delegation notes with concern that the period covered by the current report has been one of mixed results in terms of the capacity of the Security Council to deal effectively with the different sources of instability around the world.

While there have been some notable successes, there continue to be conflicts which undermine the political, economic and social fabric of the States concerned, bringing destruction and untold suffering to the victims of war. The increases in attacks and the use of force against refugees and other civilians, particularly women and children in conflict situations, also pose a direct challenge to the resolve of the international community.

It is against this background that my delegation welcomes the public debates held by the Security Council during the last year on the protection of humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations as well as on the impact of armed conflict on children.

My delegation remains perturbed that Security Council resolutions have not been adhered to by several parties, thus thwarting the ability of the Council to effectively maintain control of ongoing conflicts. In this regard, I wish to underscore the importance which my delegation attaches to the Security Council as the principal authority for multilateral decision-making in matters affecting international peace and security. We therefore reiterate our concern at the tendency of States to take unilateral action which they deem to be in their national interest in situations of conflict with other nations. Jamaica reaffirms its confidence in the principle of collective security, on which the role of the Security Council is predicated.

In addition to the substance of the report, my delegation attaches great importance to reform of the Security Council. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council in the conduct of its extensive discussions. These discussions have generated many concrete ideas and proposals pertaining to the decision-making process of the Council as well as to its structure, which could contribute to making the Council more efficient and effective.

We are disappointed that further progress has not been achieved and that the realization of the reform of the Council remains a distant hope.

The Security Council is vital to the functioning of the United Nations. It is therefore essential for its effectiveness that it command the confidence of the international community. Jamaica supports an expansion of membership which would make the Security Council more representative of the Member States it serves. We also advocate the adoption of further procedures which would make the Council more democratic and transparent in its decision-making. In this connection, we were pleased to note the position paper on the working methods of the Security Council attached to the monthly assessment by the presidency of Costa Rica for December 1997. We hope that these proposals will be institutionalized.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): My delegation welcomes today's opportunity to deliberate on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We consider this practice to be an important step forward in ensuring closer collaboration and coordination between the two principal United Nations organs sharing the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We appreciate the steady efforts made by the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat to make the report more user-friendly and substantive. We also join others in thanking the President of the Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his useful introductory remarks.

It is indeed difficult to pursue transparency and efficiency at the same time. But these two concepts complement each other. In this age of information, it goes without saying that the efficiency of any organization depends to a large extent upon how adequately information is internally shared. However, the degree of information-sharing relies heavily upon the extent of transparency within the organization. Therefore, we are of the view that efficiency and transparency can and should be pursued in tandem within the United Nations.

Having said that, in my comments today I will focus mainly on the issue of ensuring greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, which is essential to enhancing closer interaction and collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly, which is envisaged also in the Charter of the United Nations.

My first point relates to the need to ensure greater substantiveness and analytical depth to the annual report. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that improvements were made this year, as for the first time monthly assessments by the presidency were attached as an addendum to the report. This is a welcome step forward. These monthly assessments serve as a useful complement to the report and enable the outgoing President to provide an individual view on the work of the Security Council for every month in a more substantive way. For this reason, the Republic of Korea, upon completion of its presidency of the Council in May last year, took the voluntary initiative to introduce the new practice of preparing and distributing monthly assessments.

We commend the efforts of all those delegations that provided comprehensive monthly assessments in the attachment to the report. Moreover, we welcome the initiatives to distribute the assessments to the general membership as an official document immediately following their issuance. These are concrete steps contributing to the improvement of the historical transparency of the Council's work. It is our sincere hope that they will continue to be further built upon.

Another related issue is transparency in the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, including the sanctions committees. Recently, a number of transparency measures, such as the Chairman's briefings to non-members, have been introduced. We also note that this year's report contains information regarding the work of the subsidiary organs. This is a positive improvement on last year's report, which contained only the dates of the meetings of the subsidiary organs. But we believe that more can be done. We are of the view that decisions and/or the relevant parts of the summaries of the proceedings of subsidiary organs should promptly be made available to non-members of the Council, as long as they do not compromise the confidentiality of the work of the organs. We further believe that such information regarding the substantive work of the subsidiary organs, in particular the sanctions committees, should be included in the annex of the annual report of the Council.

Now allow me to turn to a subject related to the real-time transparency of the Council. In the report we noted some positive developments in the expanded use of orientation debates or open, public meetings on certain regional or thematic issues. But many delegations, including my own, believe that more needs to be done in this regard. These open meetings provide the members of

the Security Council with useful opportunities to hear the views of non-members and concerned international organizations at the beginning of the consideration of the issue by the Council. The open format of these meetings is itself the best guarantor of the real-time transparency of the Council, as it allows all interested non-members to have first-hand observation of what is transpiring in Council deliberations.

With this in mind, in May of last year my delegation organized the first open debate on protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations. We also welcome the recent follow-up open debate on the issue, organized by Sweden last month, as part of a laudable pattern of displaying the continuing interest of the Council in this issue of global concern.

We share the widely held view that the Council should do more to increase the frequency of open meetings. One easy reform would be to consider the provisional work programme for each month at the beginning of a new presidency in a formal meeting. More serious consideration should also be given to how to involve non-members in the Council's deliberations on those issues in which they have a direct interest. This requires that even more urgent attention be given to reconsidering the recent prevalence of the practice of holding informal consultations of the whole, which are conducted only among Council members.

There is also a need to set up a more effective mechanism to alert non-members of the Council to the possibility of weekend or other emergency Council meetings well in advance. Steady efforts have been made in this regard. Unfortunately, however, there still remains the problem of late notice for the Council's emergency meetings, which has prevented a number of interested non-members from taking part in such meetings. We believe that when unscheduled or emergency meetings of the Council are anticipated, the presidency of the Security Council should make its best efforts to give instructions to the Secretariat so that it can send emergency notices to non-members of the Council as soon as possible.

Last but not least, we cannot overemphasize the need to continue our collective efforts to devise new transparency measures that are both feasible and easily implementable. It is essential for the Council to keep abreast of the general membership's views proposed in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. In this regard, the informal working group on Council documentation and procedure should play a more proactive role in filtering the propositions made in the Open-ended Working Group and refining them in a practical way. We are of the view that these two working groups can reinforce each other in pursuing the common task of ensuring the greater transparency of the Council.

My delegation remains deeply committed to the cause of greater transparency of the Council. At the end of our tenure in the Council last December we and other non-permanent members took the joint initiative of sending to the President of the Council a letter containing a number of practical suggestions for transparency measures. Then we followed up on that initiative in the Open-ended Working Group by submitting the two written proposals that are contained in the Working Group's report to the General Assembly.

Before concluding, I wish to emphasize the need for a more effective partnership between the General Assembly and the Security Council in the discharge of their common task of coping with the broad range of new conflicts and instabilities in the post-cold-war period. This goal can be attained only through a continuous reform of the working methods of the Council. Indeed, transparency in the work of the Council is the easiest short cut to enhanced partnership between these two vital United Nations organs. The Republic of Korea will continue to make its positive contribution on the basis of the recent experience gained from its two-year involvement in the work of the Council.

Mr. Varso (Slovakia): At the outset, allow me to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, the representative of the United Kingdom, for his comprehensive presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. Our compliments also go to the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of the report and its submission in a timely manner.

The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as the two principal organs of the United Nations, is a crucial factor in the Organization's overall performance. Actions of the two organs must be concerted and mutually reinforcing in order to achieve greater coherence of effort to secure the primary goal of the Organization, namely, the efficient maintenance of international peace and security.

For that purpose, the flow of information on the work of the Security Council to the general membership should be as informative and transparent as possible. At present, there are just two channels through which the

general membership can obtain such information: one is the daily briefing by the presidency of the Security Council, and the other one is the annual report submitted to the General Assembly under Article 24 of the Charter. Since the daily briefing by the presidency based on the Council's informal consultations is merely an informal interaction between the presidency and non-members, the only official source of information on the Council's work remains its annual report.

In recent years, a number of points have been raised by Member States in order to transform the annual report of the Security Council into a more substantive and analytical assessment of the Council's work. After a thorough study of the Council's last report, covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998, my delegation is pleased to note several improvements in regard to the content and format of the report. Unlike previous reports, each chapter of part I is introduced by background information on the decisions taken by the Council in relation to particular subjects for the one-year period preceding the period covered. The new part V is devoted to the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council, and provides, for the first time, information on the work of the sanctions committees. Assessments of the work of the Council, prepared by each outgoing presidency under its own responsibility for the month during which it presided, are attached as an addendum to the report. This progress is highly welcome; nevertheless, we believe there is still room, as well as a need, for further improvements.

Slovakia joins the voices calling for enhancing the analytical nature of the Council's annual report. We perceive the attachment of monthly assessments of the Council's work to the report to be a first step. These assessments should be transformed into monthly reports focusing on an analytical evaluation of the Council's work within informal consultations and the process leading to decisions of the Council during the period under review. The monthly report should also reflect the divergence of views among Council members on the matter in question and should avoid factual data already covered by other parts of the annual report. In order to avoid possible lengthy discussions necessary for the monthly report's approval by the Council members, it should be prepared as the sole responsibility of the outgoing presidency.

Transparency in the decision-making process and working methods of the Security Council is a major issue of the ongoing debate on Council reform. Lack of transparency undermines the Council's credibility and contributes to widening the gap between the Council and the rest of the membership. The long-standing prevalence of the practice of informal meetings, the so-called consultations of the whole, has been a matter of concern not only of the Member States which have never served as Members of the Security Council, but also of those that have very recent experience of being non-permanent members.

Distinctive features of the informal consultations are discussion behind closed doors and the absence of any written records. The only way for non-members to get any information is either to attend an informal briefing by the presidency conducted later that day or to spend the necessary amounts of time in the next room, waiting for a Council member willing to share some information at the end of the consultations. Apparently, the current practice does not meet the requirements for the interaction between the Council and the general membership to be open and transparent. Although the Security Council is master of its work, informal consultations should not serve as a systematic substitute for formal meetings, but rather a complementary one.

We believe that records not only of the formal meetings of the Council, but also of its informal consultations, should be included in its annual report. This would enhance significantly the transparency of the Council's work, ensure the accountability of each of its members to the rest of the membership and improve its relationship with the General Assembly. Similarly, there is a need to bring the work of the sanctions committees closer to the general membership. The sanctions committees rely in most cases solely on the cooperation of States and organizations in a position to provide them with pertinent information on violations of the sanctions concerned. Thus, efficient implementation of the measures taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, and the subsequent establishment of a comprehensive regime to monitor the implementation of the prohibitions, is a two-way process. Enhanced transparency and closer cooperation between the Security Council and Member States are needed if the actions of the Security Council, taken on behalf of Member States, are to be more resolute and efficient.

The dynamics of the post-cold-war era have brought new challenges to the United Nations and its principal organs, including the Security Council. Many conflicts of this period have taken the form of intra-State violence, civil strife and ethnic clashes that have significant external repercussions and disastrous humanitarian implications. However, the more recent decline in

peacekeeping activity without a parallel decline in the level of conflict requiring international attention may prove to be counter-productive. The Security Council cannot afford this kind of lethargy, which could lead to possible damage to its credibility. A timely decision and response of the Security Council to a conflict or threat of conflict, including preventive measures, are crucial in order to avoid the multiplication of tragic consequences.

Peacekeeping operations have taken on a more complex nature, often fulfilling multifunctional tasks. Troop-contributing countries which carry the burden of a peacekeeping operation on the ground should be allowed to participate appropriately in the decision-making process before any decision on the mandate of the operation has been taken by the Security Council.

We appreciate the framework within which the current practice of holding meetings of troop-contributing countries has been established. However, those meetings should not become routine, but rather ensure the more active participation of troop-contributors and a constructive exchange of views. In this connection, my delegation is proposing that the relevant section of the Council's annual report, currently a mere list of dates, be filled in with a description of the most important points raised at particular meetings of troop-contributing countries.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again the importance of the interactive and transparent relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Slovakia is ready to contribute to further improvements in the work of the Security Council. It is also in this context that my country aspires to be elected a member of the Security Council for the period 2000-2001.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): At the outset, I wish to thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for the report he has submitted and the Secretariat for preparing a comprehensive report on the work of the Security Council.

The work of the Security Council, which enjoys comprehensive power in the maintenance of international peace and security, is at the focus of the international community's attention. The Security Council's authority, as confirmed in the practice of recent years, is broad enough to prevent and seek solutions to crisis situations through the methods of preventive diplomacy, with minimum recourse to the use of force, which generally cannot be used without the Council's authorization.

In recent times, the international community has attached serious importance to the process of the structural and institutional reform of the Security Council, a main organ of the United Nations system devoted to long-standing traditions that must adapt to contemporary realities. We feel that its willingness to seek compromise in the broader interests of the Member States should guarantee the success of the Council's reform process, which calls for a corresponding display of political will.

We believe that changes in the context of the Security Council should seek to ensure the equitable geographical representation on the Council of all regional groups, without exception; increased transparency and openness of the Council; and a rationalization of its working methods in the areas of information and consultation.

The main components of reform include the improvement of the Security Council's accountability mechanism, one element of which is the Council's submission to the General Assembly of annual reports on its work.

The substance of the Security Council's report, in our view, lies not in the simple provision and subsequent recording of statistical information, but in the desire to establish an extensive dialogue on the problems between the two most authoritative organs that would include an analysis of the various points of view and their synthesis in specific, rational proposals for resolving issues on the Council's and the Assembly's agendas. It is precisely along these lines, in our view, that the Security Council should improve and develop its practice of submitting reports.

The Republic of Belarus notes with satisfaction some definite progress in the preparation and submission of the Security Council's report this year. As before, we would stress primarily the need to make the substantive sector of the report more analytical, based on an examination of both the process of preparing the Council's decisions and of the specific results of its work. In this context, the new practice of supplementing the Council's reports with monthly analytical assessments of its work, prepared by representatives of former Presidents of the Council, is a positive one.

At the same time, as can be seen in the draft report, this material should not be limited to general reiterations of the text of the report itself for any given period, but should seek to analyze and assess the internal specifics of

the Council's work from the perspective of its President. It should also contain commentaries and proposals with respect to the Council's adoption of decisions. Constructive approaches along these lines were demonstrated by the delegations of Costa Rica, Chile and Portugal. We rightfully expect the further confirmation of this practice in the Council's work.

An additional impetus for enhancing the report's analytical nature could be the preparation of analytical reviews of the most important decisions taken by the Council for the period under consideration, including an account and description of the motives for the decisions and the difficulties involved in their adoption.

The goal of achieving greater transparency in the Security Council's work can be met by including in the report brief summaries of the results of the Council's informal consultations of the whole. I wish to express the hope, in this regard, that such information will be made available in written form as the consultations are held, not merely at the end of the reporting period in the text of the Council's report.

One of the most feasible and effective ways to improve the report further could be a deeper preliminary consideration of the draft report at open meetings. Moreover, it seems important — as we have stressed more than once — to introduce into practice procedures for the submission of Security Council reports by the President in office at the time of their consideration or by one of the permanent members, on a rotational basis, as well as a statement in response by the President of the Council or by one of the five permanent members following the completion of the discussion of any given item on the agenda as a preliminary reaction to the proposals and recommendations made by member States.

We also feel that it would be useful to include in the Council's work the practice of holding guideline discussions, at the level of Foreign Minister, on the most important issues on the international agenda, similar to the meeting held by the Security Council on 24 September this year on progress in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

Bearing in mind the convergence of approaches on the part of most States in considering the working methods and transparency of the Council, with respect to which an entire series of innovations has been tried and proven, the Republic of Belarus supports the continuation, during the course of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We hope that the Working Group's activities will open up broader possibilities for new proposals to improve current practices in the Security Council's work.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to thank Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock for presenting the annual report of the Security Council in his capacity as President of that body. It is worth noting that in doing so he was acting within the letter and spirit of the Charter of the Organization and in accordance with Articles 15 and 24.

While it is true that the Security Council is, indeed, the most important body in the Organization because of the priority role entrusted to it, it is no less true that its activities are carried out on behalf of and as representing its Member States, as is clearly expressed in Article 24 of the Charter. My country therefore considers the subject of this General Assembly meeting to be very important, both formally and substantively, as the Council is thereby fulfilling its duty by informing the sovereign body of the Organization about the activities that it has carried out in accordance with its mandate.

We are pleased that the form and content of the report reflects considerable progress towards the objectives that the General Assembly has set out in its resolutions, the most recent being 51/193 of 17 December 1996. However, that will not prevent us from taking this opportunity to refer to certain objectives that my delegation believes should be pursued as soon as possible so that the Security Council does not lose the credibility that, in the opinion of the States represented here and of the public in general, it must have if it is to function properly.

The purposes and principles of the Charter have been and continue to be the standard according to which any activity carried out must be cleared and reaffirmed, as must any basis for reform, in both form and substance.

I do not believe I am mistaken in asserting that it is generally acknowledged that the main area of competence of the Security Council — the maintenance of international peace and security — has changed over time and that the conflicts with which the Council must deal differ in both form and character from those formerly

within its competence. Furthermore, progress in communications technology means that other ways and means must be envisaged for its activities on the basis of their new character.

In this context, we reaffirm once more that there can be no peace without development and that there can be no development without education. We therefore believe that the activities of the United Nations should be focused on achieving those values so as to accomplish its goals successfully and on a permanent basis.

As is well known, my country, Uruguay, has had a significant presence in peacekeeping operations since their inception, taking part in 16 missions with a total of about 10,000 men, with some loss of human life. However, that does not keep us from recognizing that conflict prevention has become as important as dealing with conflict itself and that, in turn, if post-conflict activities are not dealt with in a responsible manner, the result might be the rekindling of conflicts that had been extinguished. My country therefore considers the work of the Organization in that area to be vital.

In that context, we agree with what has been reaffirmed here by many colleagues with regard to seeking greater coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, giving greater viability to the Articles of the Charter that provide for such coordination so that the Economic and Social Council can play its essential role in the work of building or rebuilding peace wherever cooperation is required in various spheres such as agriculture, education, health and civil and civic life in all of its dimensions.

I should not like to proceed with these brief comments without acknowledging that while there has been some noteworthy progress in the activity of the Security Council, much remains to be done to ensure that it becomes more transparent and democratic and that a greater part is played by States that are not members of the Council, as well as generally by those directly affected by measures taken by that body. In such cases the channels of communication between those countries and the Council leave much room for improvement.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that open meetings will take place more frequently at which the opinions of non-members can be heard; that Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council will be fully applied so as to increase the necessary participation of non-members in Council meetings; that more periodic meetings will be held with countries that are affected by the decisions of the Council; and that non-members will be invited to participate in the informal consultations of the Council when it discusses issues that affect them directly, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would first like to thank the Security Council for having submitted on a timely basis to the General Assembly the report under consideration relating to its activities over the past year, from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998, which has been submitted in conformity with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. I should also like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Greenstock of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report.

The Assembly's annual discussion of the report of the Security Council provides an opportunity for 170 States Members of the Organization that are not members of the Council to be informed of the activities of this important body, whose main function is the maintenance of international peace and security. It also provides a valuable opportunity for the members of the Assembly to make observations and suggestions about how to improve the flow of information between the two principle bodies of our Organization, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We note with interest the improvements made by the Security Council in its report to the Assembly for the past year, particularly the inclusion of information relating to the work of subsidiary bodies of the Council, including the sanctions committees, and the introduction of information relating to the documentation, working methods and procedure of the Council as well as to meetings with troop-contributing countries.

We wish also to express our appreciation for the a practice reflected in this year's report: the inclusion of brief assessments of the work of the Council by successive Presidents. Even if these are not intended to reflect the views of the Council, they have the merit of adding to the available information on the substance of the work of the Council, especially with regard to informal meetings. This and other elements certainly have their advantages, and we welcome them.

Yet my delegation considers that, despite these innovations, the report of the Council in its new form remains a document whose basic concept is basically

unchanged; it continues to be a compilation of Council decisions — resolutions and presidential statements — and of communications and documents received and generated by that organ, along with a factual description of the work of the Council. What is needed is an analysis of the items submitted to the Council and of the Council's consideration of them.

That is why it is important for the Security Council to submit to the General Assembly special reports on specific questions, as needed — for which provision is made in the Charter. That would certainly help improve the information available to all States Members of the Organization on the substance of the Council's activities, particularly at a time when those activities have proliferated and grown more diverse. Above all, it would facilitate objective assessment of the work of the Council.

We welcome the readiness expressed by the Security Council to continue its consideration of other ways to improve its documentation and procedures, including the submission of special reports as provided for in Article 24 (3) of the Charter. We appeal to the Council to formulate new measures to increase the transparency of its work. Here, we favour more formal meetings open to all Member States, enabling them to address the Council on a variety of important questions. We suggest also improved modalities for the reports made by the President of the Council to non-members following informal consultations; these should be more detailed.

In conclusion, I express my hope that the Council will continue to give due attention to improving the form and content of its report to the Assembly, and to increasing transparency in its work. We hope too that the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council will lead to a specific plan for reforming the Council's working methods in a manner that will meet the shared expectations of all countries.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Burkina Faso, who wishes to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply on behalf of the States members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In his statement on agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council", delivered at the 41st meeting, the representative of Canada commented on the decision by the heads of State of the OAU to lift sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. In his view, this constituted "a troubling precedent which ... is contrary to the ... Charter".

I believe that I speak for the OAU in saying that we feel rather indignant about this, and that we do not understand Canada's position. When the representative of Canada spoke of respect for the Charter he was knocking at an open door. We remind him that the OAU has a charter of its own, founded on the same principles of international law and the same moral values. Above all, Africa has wisdom of its own, which gives priority to dialogue over coercion in the settlement of all disputes and misunderstandings. It is inconceivable to us that in any major forum, much less the United Nations, anyone should venture so blithely to censure a unanimous decision by 53 heads of State, forgetting that their countries constitute nearly a third of the membership of the United Nations.

Our leaders took the decision to lift the embargo against Libya after lengthy consideration, after an in-depth analysis of the situation and after weighing all the pros and cons. African States, to be sure, are Members of the United Nations, but Africa has its own problems, to which we are seeking African solutions. Our position cannot be interpreted as a challenge to the Security Council. Our consolation is that this assessment did not come from the two members of the Security Council that are directly involved in the crisis; their restraint since the Ouagadougou decision leads us to believe at the least that they understand the decision so cautiously taken by our heads of State.

Africa will certainly take note of Canada's attempt to repay it in this way for its votes, which counted for a great deal in Canada's election to a Security Council seat. African representatives here in any event are well aware of this state of affairs, and through the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, we will of course bring it to the attention of our heads of State.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to take note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/53/2?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.